

**ETHN 176/MUS 154/LTEN 187 Black Music/Black Texts:
Music and Sound in Black Cultural Production**

Cognitive Science Building 001
Tu/Th 11-12:20

Instructor: Dr. Roshanak Kheshti
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Office Hours 231 Social Science Building:
Wednesdays noon-2pm
Thursdays 5-6pm

Description:

This course examines the centrality of music and sound to black consciousness. We will primarily examine works that emerge from US and British contexts and will therefore anchor our inquiry around colonialism, slavery, sexuality, gender, race, technology and resistance.

Course Objectives:

Students will develop a critical and analytical understanding of black popular cultures especially as they pertain to music and sound. Additionally, students will gain a working understanding of cultural studies scholarship and its significance for popular cultural research.

Required Texts:

All readings are available through e-reserves on the library electronic reserves page.

Coursework:

Reflection Papers & Keywords (25% of final grade)

Each student is responsible for submitting a total of **ten (5)** reflection papers that are no less than one page (double-spaced, 12pt. font) and no more than one and a half pages in length. Reflection papers: should 1) raise questions or issues about the readings; 2) make connections between various readings; 3) apply the readings to current events; incorporate one or more readings from the week of submission, making direct reference to the reading. Each reflection should have your name and the reflection number written at the top. Only one reflection paper will be accepted per class meeting. Also, reflection papers are not to be submitted in my mailbox or by email.

Keywords

In addition to reflection papers, you will submit 2 keyword encyclopedia entries a week defined in your own language. The completed glossary of 20 key concepts should be submitted in a report cover or a portfolio with fasteners with your final paper but will be accumulated over the quarter.

Analytical Papers (totalling 50% of final grade)

Each student will submit a total of two analytical papers. These papers **must** be submitted at the **beginning** of lecture on the due date. Papers will not be accepted from students arriving to lecture late on these days. The first will include materials covered in the first half of the quarter (20% of final grade) and the second will be more comprehensive and can include materials from throughout the quarter (30% of final grade).

Attendance & Assessment (25% of final grade)

Attendance, presentness, attitude and participation are factored into your overall grade. Instant messaging, texting and surfing the web do not go unnoticed; this behavior will be noted and will be reflected in your participation and presentness grade. Arriving late and leaving early will also be noted and will reflect negatively in your final grade. You may miss up to two classes and this will not affect your ability to receive an A+. However, every class missed thereafter will result in 5 points removed from your final grade. Participation is determined by your active presence and preparedness, which are key aspects to the successful fulfillment of requirements for this course.

Attendance, attitude, and participation	15 points
Keywords journal	10 points
Reflection Papers	25 points
Analytical Papers	50 points

Class philosophy and pedagogy:

📺 This class is intended for students interested in challenging commonly held understandings of expressive culture and politics. The course is based around core theoretical themes and critiques, which are not opinions but rather theories that will form the basis for our analysis of musical texts and the racial and gendered discourses through which they circulate. This course will be challenging for those with no background in ethnic studies and/or critical gender studies. 📺 Additionally, it will be challenging for those whose study time is juggled between parenting, work, activist and other scholarly obligations. Regardless, every student invested in regularly attending class and keeping up with reading assignments can achieve high marks. 📺 Some students will need to utilize office hour time in order to get necessary background and direction on the material. ESL students may need to consult the resources at the OASIS center in order to earn full points on assignments. It is your responsibility to seek and utilize these resources as the need arises.

Note on Films: All films are available in the Media Resources Center on the first floor of the Moffitt Library. If you miss an in-class film screening or clip, it

is your responsibility to see the film on your own time. Films are considered as important as written texts in this class, and just as with the reading, you are expected to keep up with the rest of us.

Week 1 Introductions

Tuesday 1/6 Course intro and syllabus overview

Film: *Representation and the Media* by Sut Jhally and Stuart Hall

Thursday 1/8

Stuart Hall "The Spectacle of the 'Other'" in *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*

Week 2

Tuesday 1/13

W.E.B. Dubois "Of the Sorrow Songs" in *The Souls of Black Folk*

Lucius Outlaw "Toward a Critical Theory of Race" in *Anatomy of Racism* edited by David Theo Goldberg

Thursday 1/15

George Lipsitz "Jazz: The Hidden History of Nationalist Multiculturalism" in *Footsteps in the Dark*

Eric Porter "A Marvel of Paradox" in *What is this thing called Jazz?*

Week 3 Race & Gender

Tuesday 1/20 Katherine Boutry "Black and Blue: The Female Body of Blues Writing in Jean Toomer, Toni Morrison and Gayl Jones" in *Black Orpheus: Music in African American Fiction* edited by Saadi A. Simawe

Thursday 1/22 Gwendolyn Pough "My Cipher Keeps Movin' Like a Rollin' Stone: Black Women's Expressive Cultures and Black Feminist Legacies" in *Check it While I Wreck It*

Week 4 Race, Gender and Sexuality

Tuesday 1/27 Angela Davis "Introduction" and "I Used to be your Sweet Mama" in *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*

Thursday 1/29 Freya Jarman-Ivens "Queer(ing) Masculinities in Heterosexist Rap Music" in *Queering the Popular Pitch*

Week 5 African Diaspora/Black Atlantic

Tuesday 2/3 Paul Gilroy "Jewels Brought from Bondage" in *The Black Atlantic*

Thursday 2/5 Alexander Weheliye "Sounding Diasporic Citizenship" in *Phonographies*

Week 6 Politics of Appropriation

Tuesday 2/10 E. Patrick Johnson "Sounds of Blackness Down Under"

Thursday 2/12 George Lipsitz "White Desire: Remembering Robert Johnson" in *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*

Week 7 Black Aesthetics: Improvization

Tuesday 2/17 George E. Lewis "Improvised Music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives" in *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music* edited by Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner

Thursday 2/19
Leroi Jones "Swing---From Verb to Noun" in *Blues People*

Ralph Ellison "Living with Music" and "Blues People" in *The Collected Essays of Ralph Ellison* edited by John Callahan

Week 8 Black Aesthetics: Afro Futurism

Tuesday 2/24 Alexander Weheliye "Hearing Sonic Afro-Modernity" in *Phonographies*

Thursday 2/26 Paul D. Miller "Algorithms: Erasures and the Art of Memory" in *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music* edited by Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner

Week 9 The Globalization of Black Popular Cultures

Tuesday 3/3 Ted Swedenberg "Islamic Hip-Hop verses Islamophobia" in *Global Noise* by Tony Mitchell

Thursday 3/5 Liv Sovik "Globalizing Caetano Veloso: Globalization as Seen through a Brazilian Pop Prism" in *Brazilian Popular Music and Globalization* edited by Charles Perrone and Christopher Dunn

Week 10

Tuesday 3/10 Paul Gilroy "Between the Blues and the Blues Dance" in *The Auditory Cultures Reader* edited by Michael Bull

Thursday 3/12 Stuart Hall "What is this "Black" in Black Popular Culture?" in *Black Popular Culture*

Week 11

Tuesday 3/17 **Final Exam 3-6pm**